

UMASS LOWELL IS PROUD TO PRESENT

# The Irish in Massachusetts: *Historical Significance, Lasting Legacy*

*Conference in Partnership with  
Queen's University Belfast*



*Learning with Purpose*



From UMass Lowell archives, circa 1896.



**Sept. 24-26**

UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center  
Lowell, MA.

[www.uml.edu/irish-conference](http://www.uml.edu/irish-conference)



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## **THE IRISH IN MASSACHUSETTS: HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, LASTING LEGACY**

**Wednesday, September 24, 2014 -  
Friday, September 26, 2014**

This talk looks at the history of Ireland from the early seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century, a period of momentous change at many different levels – social, economic, agricultural, religious and political. Through exploring the lives and backgrounds of a number of individuals of Irish birth or background – ranging from economic opportunists to exiles of 1798 – who made their way to Massachusetts this talk will look at conditions in Ireland at a number of critical junctures during the period under review.

\*Session sponsored by Ann Marie Hurley

10:15 – 10:30 a.m.

**UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center  
50 Warren Street  
Lowell, MA 01852**

## Wednesday, September 24, 2014

**5:30 – 6:30 p.m.**

### **Conference Registration**

*Location: Hallway outside Lower Locks Room, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor*

**6 – 8 p.m.**

### **Networking Reception, Introductions and Keynote Address**

#### **Conference Introduction**

**Chair:** Victoria Denoon, Co-Director, Center for Irish Partnerships

**Speakers:** The Honorable Rodney Elliott, Mayor of the City of Lowell

Martin T. Meehan, Chancellor of UMass Lowell

Professor Audrey Horning, Head of the School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology at Queen's University Belfast.

#### **Keynote Address**

**Title:** The Irish-Americans

**Chair:** Dr. Brian Mitchell, Immigration and labor historian; author of "The Paddy Camps: The Irish of Lowell, 1821-1861"

**Speaker:** Dr. Timothy Meagher, Associate Professor and University Archivist, The Catholic University of America

*Location:* Lower Locks Room, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

Dr. Timothy Meagher is an associate professor of History, and University Archivist, at The Catholic University of America. The focus of his teaching and research is: American immigrant history, the Irish in America, and Catholic history. His publications include books such as "From Paddy to Studs: Irish-American Communities in the Turn of the Century Era, 1880 to 1920" (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986); "The New York Irish," edited with Ronald H. Bayor (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); "Inventing Irish America: Generation, Class and Ethnic Identity in a New England City, 1880 to 1928" (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2001); and "A Guide to Irish American History" (Columbia University Press, 2005).

## **Thursday, September 25, 2014**

**8 – 8:30 a.m.**

### **Conference Registration**

*Location:* *Hallway outside Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor*

**8:30 – 9:15 a.m.**

### **Ireland and the Atlantic World 1550 - 1650**

*Chair:* Dr. Stephen McCarthy, Co-Director of the Center for Irish Partnerships, UMass Lowell Distinguished University Professor (2012-2015)

*Speaker:* Professor Audrey Horning, Head of the School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology at Queen's University Belfast.

*Location:* *Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor*

In 1617, English chronicler Fynes Moryson casually described Ireland as ‘this famous island in the Virginian Sea’, referencing the contemporary activities of the British in both lands. Building on that association, scholars of colonial America often assume that Ireland served as a colonial testing ground, but it is argued here that colonial projects in Ireland and North America were instead haphazard as well as mutually constitutive; linked by individuals, linked by ideologies of improvement, linked by economic imperatives, but sharply divided by the actualities of cultural contacts and by the structure of the relationship between crown and colony, core and periphery. Archaeological case studies contradict assumptions about Ireland’s role as a colonial model, while also revealing the considerable influence of, respectively, Gaelic Irish and eastern Algonquian cultures in shaping settler societies, in ways often obscured by the documentary record.

**9:30 – 10:15 a.m.**

### **Ireland in the Early Modern Age**

*Chair:* Steven Rogers, Center for Irish Partnerships Advisory Board

*Speaker:* Dr. William Roulston, Research Director, Ulster Historical Foundation

*Location:* *Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor*

This talk looks at the history of Ireland from the early seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century, a period of momentous change at many different levels - social, economic, demographic, religious and political. Through exploring the lives and backgrounds of a number of individuals of Irish birth or background – ranging from economic opportunists to exiles of 1798 - who made their way to Massachusetts this talk will look at conditions in Ireland at a number of critical junctures during the period under review.

**\*Session sponsored by Ann Marie Hurley**

**10:15 – 10:30 a.m.**

### **Coffee/Tea Break**

*Location:* *Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor*

**10:30 – 11:15 a.m. Mr. Gookin out of Ireland, wholly upon his owne adventure: Intercolonial and Transatlantic Connections in the Seventeenth Century.**

Speaker: Luke Pecoraro, Assistant Director for Archaeological Research,

George Washington's Mount Vernon

Location: *Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor*

Daniel Gookin Jr. is perhaps one of the better-known figures in colonial Massachusetts history, as an important civil servant and military leader. The third son of an English planter from Kent who settled in County Cork during the second phase of the Munster Plantation in 1611, Daniel Gookin Jr. was born in Ireland, and became involved in his father's plantation projects in Virginia, migrating to North America in 1625. He was a Puritan, which became the catalyst for him to go to Massachusetts in 1644 where he remained until his death in 1687. This paper will outline the biography of Daniel Gookin Jr. and the influences from Ireland he brought with him to Massachusetts. Though the period of time that Gookin spent in Ireland was brief compared to the other places he lived, it was his first experience in a colonial project, and he carried the knowledge he gained from this venture into North America. Complex social networks between Gookin and his family in Ireland, trade partnerships in New England and the Chesapeake, and his role as a military commander and mediator between Indians in Virginia and Massachusetts can be traced historically, but the archaeological record provides a compelling dataset of material remains that flesh out Daniel Gookin's dynamic colonial career.

**11:30 – 12:15 p.m. The Irish in Maine, 1760-1820**

Speaker: Dr. Ed McCarron, Associate Professor of History at Stonehill College

Location: *Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor*

Limerick, Finn Brook, Drummore Bay – these are some of the place names on the Maine landscape that echo an Irish presence or identity in the years up to 1820. They reflect a broad range of experience, ranging from eighteenth century land ventures, to the settlement of early Irish families in the Maine backcountry. This talk will highlight some of the patterns of Irish experience in early Maine – such as the settlement of Scots-Irish families along the frontier, and the experience of Irish indentured servants in eighteenth century Maine. We will also focus on the early Irish Catholic community that emerged in the Damariscotta region of mid-Maine during the Early Republic, one that centered on St. Patrick Church in Newcastle. Throughout this talk we will frame our perspective at the ground level – exploring local landscapes, case studies, and individual lives to illuminate larger patterns and questions.

**12:15 – 1:15 p.m. Lunch**

Location: *Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor*

- 1:30 - 2:15 p.m.      Long Threatening comes at Last: Ireland's Great Famine in Irish-American History**
- Speaker:      Dr. Mary Kelly, Professor of History at Franklin Pierce University
- Location:      *Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor*

Professor Kelly will address the role of Ireland's Great Hunger in shaping Irish-American identity between the 1840s and 1990s. Within a timeframe encompassing the long-term impact of the episode on immigrant Irish settlement and culture, she engages the following themes: the shadowed landscape of Famine legacy; the evolution of Famine memory in response to changing cultural imperatives, and the episode's ultimate solidification as a pillar of Irish-American identity. Drawing on a range of sources from contemporary press accounts to writings by Famine survivors and ensuing generations, and referencing particularly the Boston and Massachusetts Irish in this regard, Professor Kelly shows how Famine scholarship and commemoration have enabled the Irish on both sides of the Atlantic to deal constructively with the psychic and emotional inheritance of this tragic experience.

**\*Session Sponsored by The Regan Family**

- 2:30 – 3:15 p.m.      The Union, Slavery, and Irish Americans in the Civil War**
- Chair:      Edward J. Moloney, Center for Irish Partnerships Advisory Board
- Speaker:      Dr. Ian Delahanty, Postdoctoral fellow in the history department at Boston College
- Location:      *Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor*

The American Civil War began as a war to reunite the nation and evolved into a war to end slavery. How did Irish immigrants, who supported the restoration of the Union but were ambivalent at best about the prospect of emancipation, respond to the Union war effort's changing objectives and meaning? Their responses were varied and oftentimes shifted over time, but almost all involved some calculation of what the Union meant to the Irish and how emancipation affected the prospects of reuniting the country. Focusing especially on the Bay State's Irish-American community, this paper examines the complexities of Irish immigrants' involvement in the Civil War and situates the Massachusetts Irish within a broader national and transatlantic scope.

**\*Session Sponsored by Edward J. Moloney**

- 3:15 – 3:30 p.m.      Coffee/Tea Break**
- Location:      *Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor*

**3:30 – 4:45 p.m.**

### **Irish-American Literature**

Chair: Todd Avery, Associate Professor, English Department, UMass Lowell

Panelists: Aine Greaney, Author/Essayist  
Michael Patrick MacDonald, Author/Essayist  
Ronan Noone, Playwright

Location: Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor

Our three panelists for this session - Áine Greaney, Michael Patrick MacDonald and Ronan Noone – are all established literary figures whose Irish and Irish-American backgrounds have been a core element in their work. **Áine Greaney** is an expatriate Irish writer who lives and writes on Boston's North Shore. She writes both fiction and non-fiction. Her book *Dance Lessons*, which is set in greater Boston and Ireland, was shortlisted for the Rubery International Book Award, U.K., and came in second place in the Indie Lit Literary Awards, fiction section. **Michael Patrick MacDonald** grew up in South Boston's Old Colony housing project. After losing four siblings and seeing his generation decimated by poverty, crime, and addiction, he became a leading Boston activist, helping launch many antiviolence initiatives, including gun-buyback programs. He continues to work for social change nationally. MacDonald won the American Book Award in 2000. His national bestseller, *All Souls*, and his follow-up, *Easter Rising: A Memoir of Roots and Rebellion* have been adopted by university curriculums across the country. **Ronan Noone** emigrated from Ireland. His first play *The Lepers of Baile Baiste* (IRNE, Best New Play) was work shopped at Boston Playwrights' Theatre with Nobel Prize winning poet and playwright Derek Walcott and won the Michael Kanin Kennedy Center National Playwriting Award. His second play, *The Blowin of Baile Gall* was nominated by the American Theatre Critics Association for the Steinberg New Play Award and won the Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding New Script and the Independent Reviewers of New England award (IRNE) for Best New Play.

**\*Session Sponsored by Ann Marie Hurley**

**4:45 – 5:15p.m.**

### **Book signing**

Location: Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor

A selection of books by conference speakers will be available for purchase. Authors Áine Greaney, Ronan Noone and Michael Patrick MacDonald will be available to sign copies of their books.

**5:30 – 8 p.m.**

### **An Evening of Music and Song**

Featuring: Brian O'Donovan of WGBH's "A Celtic Sojourn", who will discuss "The role of music and song in Irish Culture", followed by music from Traditional Brew – a five piece band

Location: Old Court, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 29-31 Central Street (at the corner of Middle Street), Lowell

Join the presenter of WGBH's Celtic Sojourn Program, Brian O'Donovan, and fans of Celtic music. Hear him talk about the role of music and song in Irish Culture, and even perform a song and poetry reading. In addition, we are pleased to present live traditional Irish music from the band Traditional Brew, a merry band of acoustic musicians.

## Friday, September 26, 2014

**8 – 9 a.m.**

### **Conference Registration**

*Location:* Hallway outside Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor

**9 – 11 a.m.**

### **The Irish in Lowell**

Chair: Dr Frank Talty, Co-Director of the Center for Irish Partnerships

*Location:* Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor

**Title:** “**The Irish in Lowell: The Historical Context**”

**Speaker:** Prof Brian Mitchell, Immigration and labor historian

Professor Brian Mitchell is a recognized authority on the subject of the Irish and their contribution to the development of Lowell during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most notably through his book *The Paddy Camps: The Irish of Lowell, 1821-1861*, first published in 1988. Brian revisits the topic in this lecture, which will focus on the historical context to the period and will highlight how the Irish community in Lowell overcame adversity to develop strong religious institutions and an increased political presence in their new home town.

**Title:** “**Transatlantic Excavations: From Crossan to the Acre**”

**Speaker:** Dr Colm Donnelly, Director, Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork (CAF) and Senior Research Fellow, School of Geography, Archaeology & Palaeoecology, Queen’s University Belfast

In March 2009 an Agreement of Collaboration was signed between Queen’s University Belfast (QUB) and the University of Massachusetts in Lowell (UMass Lowell) as part of this which the latter organization’s Center for Irish Partnerships and the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork at QUB established a new archaeological research project – the Irish-American Heritage Archaeological Program (IAHAP). This program has now been running for five years and has involved staff and students from both institutions participating in archaeological excavations on the lawn outside St Patrick’s Church on Suffolk Street, Lowell, at the heart of what was once the Irish urban settlement within the 19<sup>th</sup>-century town, and at a rural cottage in County Tyrone associated with Hugh Cummiskey, one of the leading figures within Lowell’s early Irish community. With the objective to further our knowledge and understanding of life for the Irish emigrants in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Massachusetts, and the life of the Irish in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Ulster, the lecture provides an overview of what has been achieved to date.

<b>Title:</b>	<b>"St Patrick's Cemetery: Remembering the Dead"</b>
<b>Speakers:</b>	Dave McKean, Historian, St. Patrick Parish and Cemetery Eileen Murphy, Senior lecturer in Archaeology, School of Geography, Archaeology & Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast Lynne McKerr, Research Assistant, School of Education, Queen's University Belfast

The opening of St Patrick's Church in July 1831 is a testimony to the major impact that Irish Catholic immigrants had on Lowell in the early nineteenth century. Initially the dead were buried in various locations across the new city, but accounts from 1832 document the purchase of land for burial which eventually evolved into St Patrick's Cemetery. The burial ground is a rich resource of information about the first generations of Irish in Lowell. The cemetery's slate memorials are particularly well preserved and provide a wealth of information concerning demography and origins. While they were carved by the same craft workers who created the memorials in the neighboring "Yankee" cemetery, their designs were modified to contain symbols that are evidently of both Catholic and Irish origin. In this paper we will provide an outline of the history of the cemetery and an overview of this important collection of early Irish-American memorials.

**11 – 11:15 a.m.      Coffee/Tea Break**

*Location:      Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor*

**11:15 – 12:15 p.m.      Irish-American Politics in Massachusetts**

**Moderator:** Martin T. Meehan, Chancellor of UMass Lowell and former member of the U.S. House of Representatives for the Massachusetts 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District

**Panelists:** The Honorable Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Former Lt. Governor of Maryland  
The Honorable David Bartley, former Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives  
The Honorable Ray Flynn, Former Mayor of Boston and Ambassador to the Holy See

*Location:      Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor*

**Kathleen Kennedy Townsend** previously served as Maryland's first woman Lt. Governor. Before being elected Lt. Governor, Kennedy Townsend served as Deputy Assistant Attorney General of the United States. **David Bartley** is a politician and educator who served the Commonwealth as a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, including as Speaker of the House, and as President of Holyoke Community College. **Raymond Flynn**, former mayor of Boston and U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican, has been a longtime activist for peace and justice in Northern Ireland.

**12:15 – 1:15 p.m.      Lunch**

*Location:      Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor*

**1:15 - 2:15 p.m.**

**Building an Irish-American Community**

Chair: Victoria Denoon, Co-Director of the Center for Irish Partnerships  
Panelists: Imelda Murphy, Big Dig photographer  
Art McCabe, Center for Irish Partnership Advisory Board  
Jim O'Brien, Center for Irish Partnership Advisory Board  
Location: *Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor*

**Imelda Murphy** was born and reared in Dublin, Ireland and currently resides in New Hampshire. When she was working at Shreve Crump & Low, in Boston, she became aware of, and curious about the Big Dig. Having been invited to join a tour of the site for the Women in Construction organization, Imelda reckoned that were plenty of Irish working in the tunnels and she spent months trying to seek them out. She spent a year and a half getting to know the Irish on the Big Dig, taking photographs of them, and making recordings of their experiences working on this the largest construction project in American History. Her aim is to make a definitive record of the Irish input into the project for future generations. **Art McCabe** previously served an adviser to then- Congressman Marty Meehan on matters relating to economic development, community development and the Northern Ireland peace process, including serving as adviser to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister of the Northern Ireland Executive and the only North American member of the special eight member "Working Group" advising new Northern Ireland government on the creation of Public-Private Partnerships.. **Jim O'Brien** is the founder and President of the "Emerald Isle Classic" which brought American College Football to Ireland. Boston College played Army in Dublin's Lansdowne Road Stadium on November 19, 1988, the first major college football game in Europe. A former Boston College and professional football player, he was inducted into the Boston College Varsity Club Athletic Hall of Fame in 1993.

**\*Session sponsored by Ann Marie Hurley**

**2:30 – 3:30 p.m.**

**The Irish in Sport**

Chair: Dana Skinner, UMass Lowell Athletic Director  
Location: *Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor*

**Title:**

**"The Irish in Baseball"**

**Speaker:**

David Fleitz, Author of "The Irish in Baseball: An Early History"

Professional baseball took root in America in the 1860s, during the same years that the sons of Irish famine refugees began to reach adulthood. Young Americans of Irish parentage quickly demonstrated a special affinity for baseball, and while many occupations during this era were virtually closed to the immigrant, the growing sport welcomed the ambitious Irish-American athlete. As a result, professional baseball of the late 1800s and early 1900s gained a distinctly Irish flavor, one that lasted for decades. This presentation will bring into focus the enormous contribution of the Irish to the American national pastime and the many ways in which the sons of Irish immigrants and baseball came of age together.

**Title:** "The GAA in Massachusetts"  
**Speaker:** Ruairi O'Mahoney, UMass Lowell  
Appearance by Colonel Warren Perry, Barley House Wolves

There have been connections with Massachusetts and Lowell since the foundation of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), most notably the US "Invasion" of 1888 when one of the venues visited was Lowell. Since that time Gaelic games continue to have impact and importance among the Irish and Irish-American community in Massachusetts. This presentation will provide an explanation of the games covered by the GAA, the reason the GAA came into existence and background on GAA clubs in Massachusetts. The Barley House Wolves are N.H.'s first American-born hurling club. The Wolves were originally formed in 2006 by combat veterans from the New Hampshire Army National Guard as a way to stay connected as they adjusted to life post combat. Today, the Barley House Wolves are represented by N.H. veterans & active service members from all branches of the military, along with members of local law enforcement, fire rescue service, and civilians who have come to love the Irish sport.

**3:45 – 4:00 p.m.      The Evolution of the Irish-American Politician in Massachusetts**

**Speaker:** Kevin Cullen, Boston Globe (via taped presentation)  
**Location:** Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor

**4:00 – 5:30 p.m.      Conference Closing and reception**

**Location:** Junior Ballroom, 2nd Floor

**Saturday, September 27, 2014**

**10 a.m.      Tour of St. Patrick's Cemetery, led by Dave McKean**

**Location:** 1251 Gorham St. Lowell, MA.

The tour meets at the front office and takes approximately 1 hour.  
Wear comfortable walking shoes.

*We would like to extend a special thank you to our sponsors as of 9/15/14*

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